

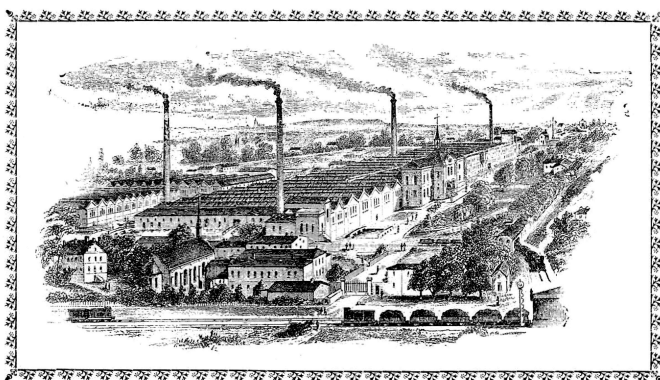
HARMEL FRÈRES

SPINNERS

Firm founded in 1797

Val-des-Bois Mill (Marne), 1840

Sabadell Mill (Spain), 1892



Val-des-Bois Mill.

REIMS

IMPRIMERIE COOPÉRATIVE (Nestor MONCE, Dir.)

24, RUE PLUCHE, 24

1901

THIS EDITION

This is an English translation of the original French text, made for the website leonharmel.com in 2026. It follows the original sentence by sentence, without cuts or additions.

The text is given in full, translated from the 1901 edition. It has been typeset in the spirit of the original: title pages and headings follow the layout of the book; the illustrations have been cut out of the digitised document and restored.

Léon Harmel, le Bon Père du Val-des-Bois

leonharmel.com

Translated from the transcription of a digitised copy.

Original document: private collection.

Version of 6 October 2026.

HARMEL FRÈRES

Spinners at VAL-DES-BOIS (Marne)

I. — ORIGINS OF THE FIRM.

1797. **Foundation of the HARMEL firm**, hand spinning of wool.

1810. **First mechanical mill.**

1822. **Second, larger mill** at Boulzicourt (Ardennes).

1840. **Mill at Val-des-Bois** (Marne).

1882. **Mill at Manchester** (America), *closed in 1894.*

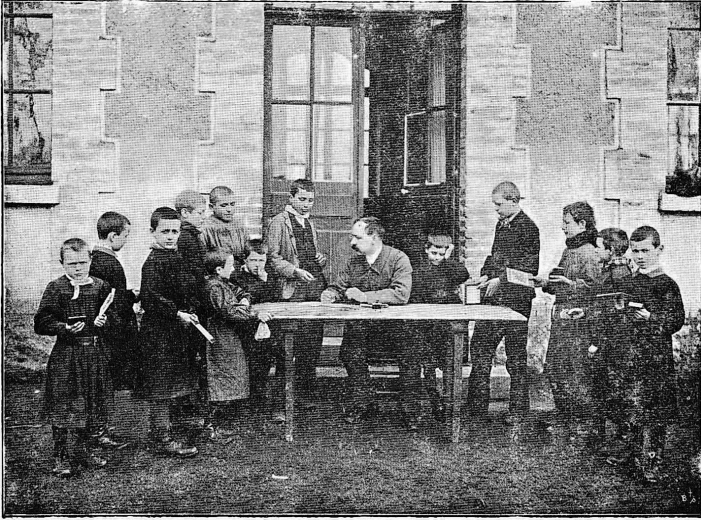
1892. **Mill at Sabadell** (Spain).



Sortie des Ouvriers.

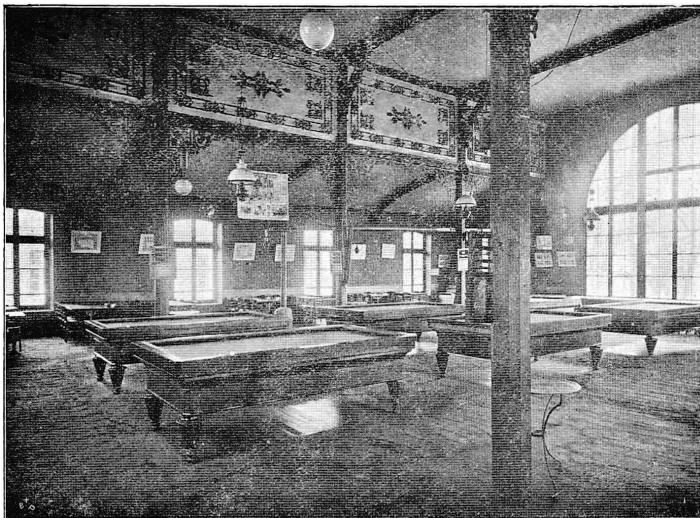
II. — FOUNDATION OF THE INSTITUTIONS OF VAL-DES-BOIS.

1840.	Savings Bank , which over the last ten years has received average annual deposits of 80,000 fr. (5 councillors).
1842.	Loan Fund for the workers , interest-free; working capital of 20,000 to 25,000 fr. (6 councillors).
1846.	Mutual Aid Society (at present 789 members, 8 councillors).
1848.	Band (at present 50 players, 6 councillors).
1852.	Dramatic Society (at present 30 members, 4 councillors).
1852.	Symphonic Society (3 councillors).
1852.	Choral Society (5 councillors).
1860.	Chapel , now able to hold 800 people (about 1,200 Communions a month).
1860.	Boys' School (at present 65 pupils).
1861.	Third Order of St Francis (at present 30 men, 72 women).
1861.	Girls' School (at present 72 pupils).
1861.	School Savings Bank (at present 184 passbooks).



Caisse d'Épargne scolaire.

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1861. **Infant School** (at present 85 children).
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1863. **Children of Mary** (girls, from fifteen until marriage. At present 162 members, 12 women councillors).
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1863. **Fire Brigade** (at present 75 members, 15 councillors).
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1864. **Association of the Holy Angels** (girls from First Communion to fifteen. At present 62 members, 10 women councillors).
-
1864. **Family Home** to take in girls living away from their parents (at present 32, who between them have savings of 4,079 fr.).
-
1865. **Adult School for Boys** working at the mill, from thirteen to sixteen (at present 31).
-
1865. **Adult School for Girls** working at the mill, from thirteen to sixteen (at present 32).
-
1867. **Accident Insurance**, giving compensation higher than the law requires today.
-
1867. **Circle** (association of men aged sixteen and over. At present 280 members, 22 councillors).
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Salle du Syndicat.

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1868. **Association of Mothers** (at present 190 members, 15 women councillors).
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1868. **Cooperative Bar**, run by the workers.
-
1868. **Pious Associations:** Rosary, St Joseph, etc.
-
1869. **Association of St Philomena** (girls from seven to First Communion. At present 50 members, 10 women councillors).
-
1869. **Hostel** for young men living away from their families.
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1872. **Association of St Aloysius Gonzaga** (boys from seven to First Communion. At present 74 members, 8 councillors).
-
1875. **Confraternity of Our Lady of the Factory (Notre-Dame de l'Usine).**
-
1875. **Professional Union** (at present 380 members, 15 syndics).
-
1877. **Conference of St Vincent de Paul** (at present 30 members).
-
1879. **Cooperative Consumer Society**, run by the workers (9 directors and 3 advisory councils).
-
1883. **Workshop Councillors**, a council made up of women workers who perform the same functions as the Factory Council does for the men (7 women councillors).
-

1883. **Factory Council made up of workers**, meeting every fortnight. It deals with all the questions concerning discipline, wages and the good organisation of work (14 councillors).
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Conseils d'Usine.

1883. **Marriage Dowry** (100 fr. to girls).
-
1883. **Old-Age Pension** (300 fr. to those who can no longer work, after more than twenty-five years of service at the mill).
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1884. **Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament** (at present 80 men, 130 women).
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1884. **Rifle Club** (4 councillors).
-
1889. **Workers' Council for spreading the good press** (at present 220 daily newspapers).
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1890. **Youth Society** (at present 40 members, 8 councillors).
-
1890. **Study Circle** (at present 31 members).
-
1890. **Veterans' Society**, made up of those who have worked more than twenty-five years at the mill (at present 80, 5 councillors).
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1891. **Family Fund** to pay the wage supplement needed to reach the level of the family wage (run by a workers' council of 5 members).
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1894. **Trade Competitions** to encourage apprenticeship.

1895. **Housekeeping School.**



École Ménagère.

III. — AWARDS WON BY THE FIRM OF HARMEL FRÈRES.

1849. National Exhibition, Paris (*Silver Medal*).

1855. Universal Exhibition, Paris (*First-Class Medal*).

1862. International Exhibition, London (*Diploma of Honour*).

1867. Universal Exhibition, Paris (*Gold Medal*).

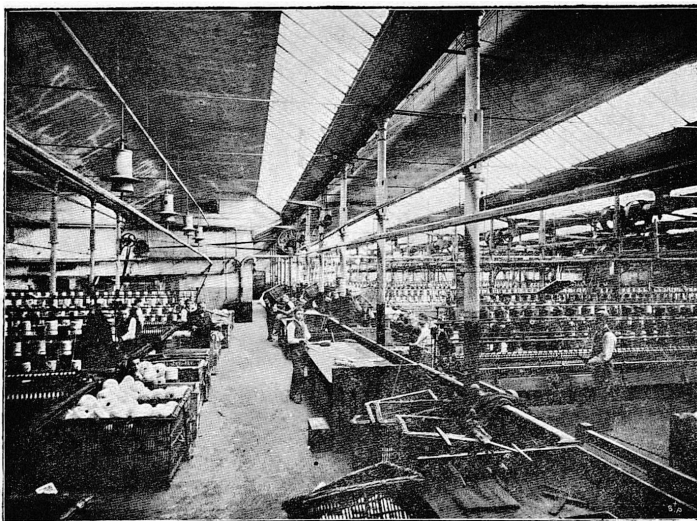
1876. Regional Exhibition, Reims (*Gold Medal*).

1878. Universal Exhibition, Paris (*Gold Medal*).

1900. Universal Exhibition, Paris (*Gold Medal*).

1878. *Diploma of Honour* from the Ministry of the Interior for social works.

1899. *Commander's Cross of Isabella the Catholic* (Spain).



Salle des Fileurs.

IV. — AWARDS WON FROM THE SOCIAL POINT OF VIEW.

(1900 Exhibition.)

Class 104.	Agricultural Union (<i>Silver Medal</i>). At present 1,133 members from 170 communes.
Class 105.	Safety in the Workshops, regulation of work, factory council (<i>Gold Medal</i>).
Class 106.	Workers' Housing (<i>Silver Medal</i>).
Class 108.	Institutions for the intellectual and moral development of the workers (<i>Workers' associations: Gold Medal</i>).
Class 109.	Provident Institutions (<i>Silver Medal</i>).
Class 102.	Wages and Remuneration of Labour (<i>Gold Medal</i>).



La Famille P...

Family wage: Family of ten children, that is 12 with the father and mother,
assured of receiving every week (12 4.20) 50.40 fr.

V. — AWARDS GRANTED TO THE WORKERS OF THE HARMEL FIRM.

19 Awards at the 1900 Exhibition.

1 *Gold Medal.*

5 *Silver Medals.*

7 *Bronze Medals.*

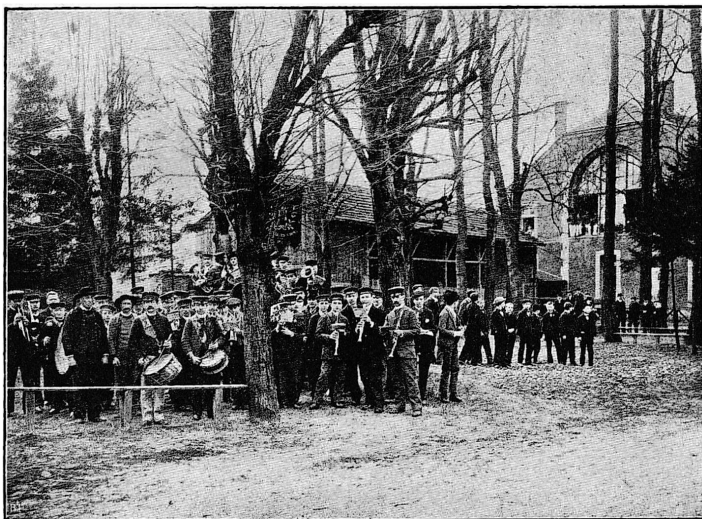
6 *Honourable Mentions.*

1 *Knight's Cross of St Sylvester.*

1 *Silver-gilt Medal* awarded by Mr Carnot himself.

38 *Medals of Honour* from the Minister of Commerce and Industry, one of them
awarded by Mr Félix Faure.

1 *Medal of Honour* (devotedness).



Fête à l'Usine.

57 *Medals of Honour.* (Industrial Society, Reims.)

1 *Medal of Honour.* (Society for the Protection of Apprentices and Children Employed in Factories, Paris.)

5 *Medals* and *honourable mentions.* (Universal Exhibition, 1878.)

22 *Diplomas of Honour.* (General Association of the Trade and Industry of Fabrics and Textile Materials, Paris.)

1 *Medal of Honour.* (Association of Industrialists of France, Paris.)

2 *Medals of Honour.* (Society for the Encouragement of National Industry, Paris.)

4 *Medals of Honour.* (*Le Play* Society of Social Economy.)

2 *Diplomas of Honour* from the Minister of the Interior. (as members of the Mutual Aid Society.)

154 *Awards* won by the workers.



Cité.